



The Hornet

The Newsletter of 100 Squadron Association

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Newsletter 72 - February 2006

Dear Colleagues,

Please note that the dates for the 2006 reunion at RAF Wyton have changed since the last newsletter. We shall now be meeting on Friday 30th June and Saturday 1st July. Possible activities for the Friday afternoon might include a visit to the newly refurbished Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, or to Duxford Air Museum. We shall give you more details in May but for now, please book the dates.

After many months of work on behalf of the Association, Flt Lt Gareth Bundock has now handed over the post of Liaison Officer. Thank you Bunders for all your help and well done!. Our new Liaison Officer is Flt Lt Liz Dawson who has promised to write us an article about herself for the next newsletter.

Our postman continues to bring us a wide variety of articles and photos for publication. Sometimes we cannot use them, but please keep them coming anyway. We love to hear from you.

And finally, may we wish a belated Happy New Year!

Best wishes to you all,

John.

Correspondence

From Alex we learn that Bob Crane is trying to get information about his mother's brother 1522473 Sgt Edgar Usher RAFVR of Bootle, Liverpool who was killed on 21st April 1944 at the age of 28 while serving with 100 Squadron. He is buried in Rheinberg War Cemetery in Germany. He flew from Grimsby, so if any reader can help with information or pictures, Bob and his sister would be so grateful. E-mail: norprop@yahoo.com

We had a message from Aubrey Simpson also seeking information about Plt Off Theo L Simpson. He writes: "as a friend and former workmate of the above who failed to return on 20th October 1943, I am endeavouring to obtain information regarding his service career for his sisters, Audrey and Pam. The crew of ED555 HW-A were laid to rest at Eelde Cemetery - Gronigen, and thanks to Hendrik Cazemier, I have been able to give them photographs of Remembrance Day 2005 with which they were very pleased. I would be grateful if any member who remembers Theo could find time to drop a line to Mrs A E Crawford, 19 Ochiltree Rd, Hastings, East Sussex TN34 2AJ or e-mail: aubrey_sinden@tiscali.co.uk

We were delighted to receive a note from Mrs June Blunden thanking us for the Newsletters and wishing all the best for the coming year.

Back in October, we had a call from Mrs Betty Warr in Woodhall Spa expressing interest in the Dedication Service at North Thoresby. We sent her a copy of Hornet 71, and she replied with the following account of the Lancaster crash. "I was 17 in 1943, living with my parents in North Thoresby and being situated close to so many airfields, daily we heard aircraft flying overhead on their bombing missions. One particular morning - 4th October 1943, I was hanging out washing in our garden when I suddenly became aware of a large aeroplane spiralling down, apparently towards me. I saw one of its engines in flames dropping to the ground in a nearby field. Then the plane crashed onto a chapel about 75 yards from where I stood. There was an explosion and the aircraft burst into flames. I ran to the scene to help in any way I could, but there was no chance of rescuing any of the crew from such an inferno. However, all we could do was to form a chain passing buckets of water to dowse the flames as best we could: possibly preventing the

fire from spreading to nearby houses. It's 62 years since I saw this dreadful crash with the loss of seven young lives, but it remains vividly in my memory. I wonder if the pilot was struggling to avoid crashing onto buildings in the village - the open fields were very close by. It's wonderful that there is now a Memorial near to the site of the crash dedicated to the crew of that ill-fated Lancaster bomber who lost their lives during WW11."

Betty Warr.

Following the ceremony last year at North Thoresby. Brian Hulme has sent this photograph of the grave of one of the crew, John Rogers, taken at Brian's local church in Upton-by-Chester. There was also a story about the crash in the local paper inviting memories of John, known as 'Podge'



History of 100 Squadron DVD... **your help is required!**

Dr Keith Ellis and Greg Harrison are working on a DVD which will cover the 90 years of Squadron history. It is intended that this DVD will be largely completed in time for the 90th reunion in June / July 2007. Keith and Greg are seeking anecdotes, memories, and most importantly any photographs which anyone might have available. If you have such items please send them to either Keith or Greg. All photographs will be treated with care and returned after copying. Please send your items to Dr Keith Ellis at:

20 Napoleon Drive Tel: 01743 360810
Bicton Heath e-mail; rk.ellis@tiscali.co.uk
Shrewsbury SY3 5PH

Obituaries

Glenn M 'Sandy' McTavish

From Canada comes news of the death of Sandy McTavish on 31st December 2005. He served as a pilot on 100 Squadron, and his Bomb Aimer Berny Sisson attended the funeral. Their last bombing raid of the war was to Hitler's hideout in the mountains.

Sandy was a bachelor who farmed highland cattle. All the cows were called 'Doris', even the large steer with very long horns! He was also a member of Shakespeare Optimists Club, the Royal Canadian Legion and the Stratford Noon Hour Club.

He is survived by his brother Grant in Australia, sisters-in-law and nieces and nephews. He will be especially missed by Murray McTavish whose daily visits enabled him to remain independent. We would like to extend our sympathy to the family and friends on behalf of the Association.

Sally Lancaster - Died 2004

From member Kathryn Reid we received the following.

I was privileged to meet Sally after the war at Waltham Memorial Days. She was always so happy to be back on this happiest of RAF Stations.

She was inspirational with her quiet dignity, her stoicism in suffering and her wonderful smile. Sadly, she died before I could keep my promise to write a poem about her.

However, writing the poem evoked memories of young aircrew, 18 years of age - some seemed even younger, enjoying with youthful exuberance the freedom of flight; speeding on their bicycles down peaceful roads to Sally's home: escaping for a brief time from the shackles of war that tragically had ensnared them.

Sally Lancaster

Little Sally Lancaster
You are remembered down the years
By the crews of 100 Squadron
And how you helped allay flying fears.
It was a strange coincidence
Intriguing and quite true
That your name should be the same
As the plane in which they flew.

In 1944's war time summer young aircrew would be seen
Cycling down the steep village street,
Racing past the village green
At a breakneck pace, one hand on the handlebar and the other
Holding precariously in place
Their parcel of washing for your mother.
Summer swallows young like them
Were darting and diving around, having fun,
Birds and boys enjoying
The circuits and bumps of the 'laundry run'.

'Landing' safely at Sally's cottage
To deliver their parcels there.
She would greet them with a happy smile
As they gathered round her chair
To watch her knitting woollen dolls
In patriotic red white and blue,
Good luck charms, three inches high,
To take with them when they had to fly
And dice with death in a hostile sky.

You were so pretty Sally Lancaster
With your lovely auburn curls,
It was sad that you would never walk and play
With other village girls.
But your labour of love in the work of your hands
Wrought mascots of magic, and the record stands....
In that invasion summer, until December
100 Squadron had a spell of good fortune

The longest anyone could remember.
Though heavily engaged in war
The cost? Only one aircraft lost.
Four aircraft survived more than 100 'ops'.
Magnificent men and machines, bravery beyond believing.
Endurance, sacrifice, guts and pluck
All played their part, but little Sally Lancaster
Wise beyond her years, knew they also needed LUCK.

By Kathryn Reid.

Congratulations

We were delighted to learn from Stamper Metcalfe that he has surpassed his own best effort at poppy selling this year. The final total was 53 full tins, and he has collected £6,939:07p. He put in 8 to 10 hours each day with just one afternoon off! Congratulations indeed to you Stamper. (Well done that man!)

Concluding: "Reflections and Circles"; **Keith Ellis' account of Operation Grapple** **and all that.**

It was now the end of June and the third and last drop was delayed several times due to the weather. Eventually it was accomplished and we all heaved a sigh of relief. Early in July, just before my 20th birthday, I was told by Chiefie to report to the Squadron Orderly Room, as Sqn Ldr Hammatt wanted to see me. 'Good grief' I thought, 'what the hell have I done so bad that I have to appear in front of the CO?' Trembling, I put on my shirt and hat, scuffed up my boots and went to the Orderly Room. I was marched into the CO's office and told to stand at ease. 'Well,' I thought 'I'm not going to be shot!' The boss looked at me and smiled. 'Well, Ellis so you want to stay with the RAF for a bit longer then.' I had completely forgotten that just before leaving Blighty I had applied to extend my terms of service. The application had been approved, and it had finally caught up with me. The boss invited me to 'sign on' then he shook my hand and asked what I would do with the £100 I would receive. 'You could buy a car' he suggested. 'Can't drive, Sir' I replied. 'Well do something useful with it' were his parting words. I have never had the opportunity or the pleasure of speaking to him again.

The rest of our time on Christmas Island was spent preparing the aircraft for the long flight back to the UK. As soon as the last one had departed, we had to wind down the detachment: stores to be packed, spares to be inventoried and packed ready for transport - it was as hectic as our arrival. It was also a bit sad and with all the aircrew gone, Chiefie was left in charge. We got the place wrapped up then had to wait our turn for the return trip. We swam a lot and enjoyed the Island. Lots of photographs were taken and distributed, and blue uniforms were aired and spruced as we would have to wear them from San Francisco onwards on the return journey.

At the end of July, we boarded a Qantas Airlines Super Constellation for the flight to Honolulu and on the San Francisco. The stewardesses were all gorgeous and they spoke Oz! The airline food tasted good, and we spent time practising chat-up lines. We also played poker with a stewardess - my word she could play and her ability to shuffle the deck

was awesome. Luckily we were only playing for pennies as we lost all the time. She could have made a fortune!

In Honolulu, we were kept on a very short leash, well away from the grass-skirted 'flooosies' as Chiefie described them. Having seen no ladies for six months, he made sure we behaved ourselves! Then it was back on the Super Connie for a night flight to San Francisco and a real hotel. After a shower, off we went to explore and met a chap who introduced himself as an ex-RAF pilot who had settled in the USA after the war. We explained about Grapple and that we were now on our way home. He escorted us around the city - such a kind and generous man.

All too soon the day was over, and it was back to the airport for our flight to New York, encountering a violent electrical storm en route which meant an unscheduled stop at Denver and a six hour wait for our flight to London. A very attractive lady engaged me in conversation: it transpired she was 'loaded' and wanted me to accompany her to the Bahamas where she owned a beach resort. It must have been the suntan and the sexy blue uniform! I did think of deserting, but Chiefie was keeping a watchful eye on things - he bought me a coffee and suggested that I could look forward to two weeks' leave before getting back to Wyton. Well a rich American could not compete with that - I therefore blew my only chance of becoming a 'toy boy', but I could never have coped with being a kept man!

We were well looked after by the stewardesses of the DC7C and slept across the Atlantic (while I dreamed of the Bahamas. Arriving at Heathrow on 31st July we were bussed to RAF Hendon for processing and pay. All my back pay, savings and my £100 were available. I will never forget Chiefie Yarnall before he dismissed the pay parade, admonishing us to enjoy our leave, behave ourselves and return to Wyton in good order.

He ended by thanking us for our efforts and told us that he was proud of us. I think he had a tear in his eye and so did many of us. I'm sure he was relieved to have got us all out there, seen us through difficult days, and to have brought us all back in one piece. He was a good man and a fine example to us all.

I enjoyed my leave in South Wales, seeing my parents again. On my return to Wyton the first person I bumped into was Chiefie, now Warrant Office Yarnall. He grinned and told me that Wyton was really a much

nicer place than the Bahamas, got on his bike and disappeared.

After six weeks I returned to Melksham for Advanced Trade Training, and I left Wyton finally in 1959 on promotion to Corporal. To date, I have never been back, but hopefully that will be rectified at the forthcoming Reunion.

In 1967, I left the RAF and gained Chartered Engineer status. The RAF faded into the background as I pursued my new career. The RAF had taught me the value of education, so in 1982 I decided to enter university. I graduated with a BSc in Management Systems then to an MSc and PhD.

By 2004, the RAF was a distant memory, but in April's RAFA magazine there was an advert referring to 100 Squadron Association. I was delighted to learn that the Squadron still existed: I wrote to Alex and so joined the Association. I attended my first reunion in June and everyone made me very welcome. The smell and sound of the aircraft hadn't changed and the memories came alive again: it was like coming home.

Nowadays, almost 50 years after serving with 100 Squadron, it seems as if the wheel of life has turned full circle. I have re-discovered my old Squadron, and I live in Shrewsbury. RAF Bridgenorth is no more, but Shrewsbury railway station hasn't changed much. Lately I've caught up with two of the navigators from those times; Wg Cdr Gordon Dyer and Sqn Ldr John Clubb. From the latter, I have learnt that Sqn Ldr Hammatt and quite a few of the aircrew from my time are still around.

100 Squadron Association is a splendid and honourable organisation whose members have a responsibility to ensure that it continues to exist, thereby preserving and honouring the memory of all those who have served and indeed fought and died with 100 Squadron. Nevertheless, Operation Grapple is also an important part of the Squadron history, and I am pleased to have played my own small part. We who have served and those who serve today in defence of the United Kingdom have much to be proud of. Let that tradition of pride and commitment to 100 Squadron, Royal Air Force continue through the work and comradeship of 100 Squadron Association.

Acknowledgement and thanks to: Sqn Ldr Alex Wedderburn who re-introduced me to 100 Squadron; Arthur White for "The Hornet's Nest"; it is an absorbing read and a superb work of reference; those who served with 100 Squadron (Recce Detachment) during 1956-57 for their comradeship and companionship at RAF Wyton and Christmas Island; Sqn Ldr John Clubb for his encouragement to write this article and for reading and correcting my errant observations and for providing photographs; Sqn Ldr Hammatt and Flt Lt Peter Langdon whose photographs appear here.

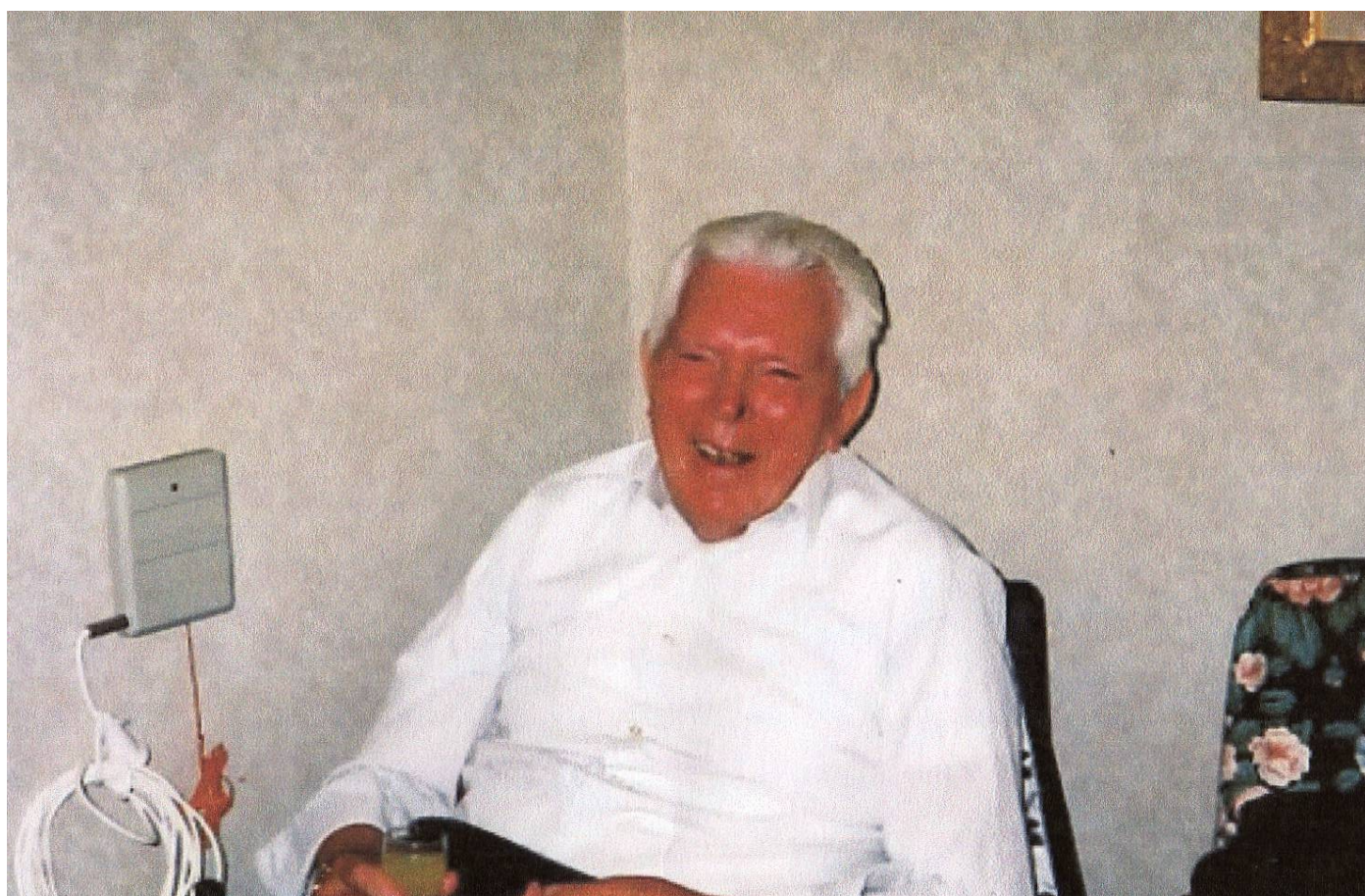
We are very grateful to Keith for this article. It has been slightly shortened to fit the newsletter. Ed.



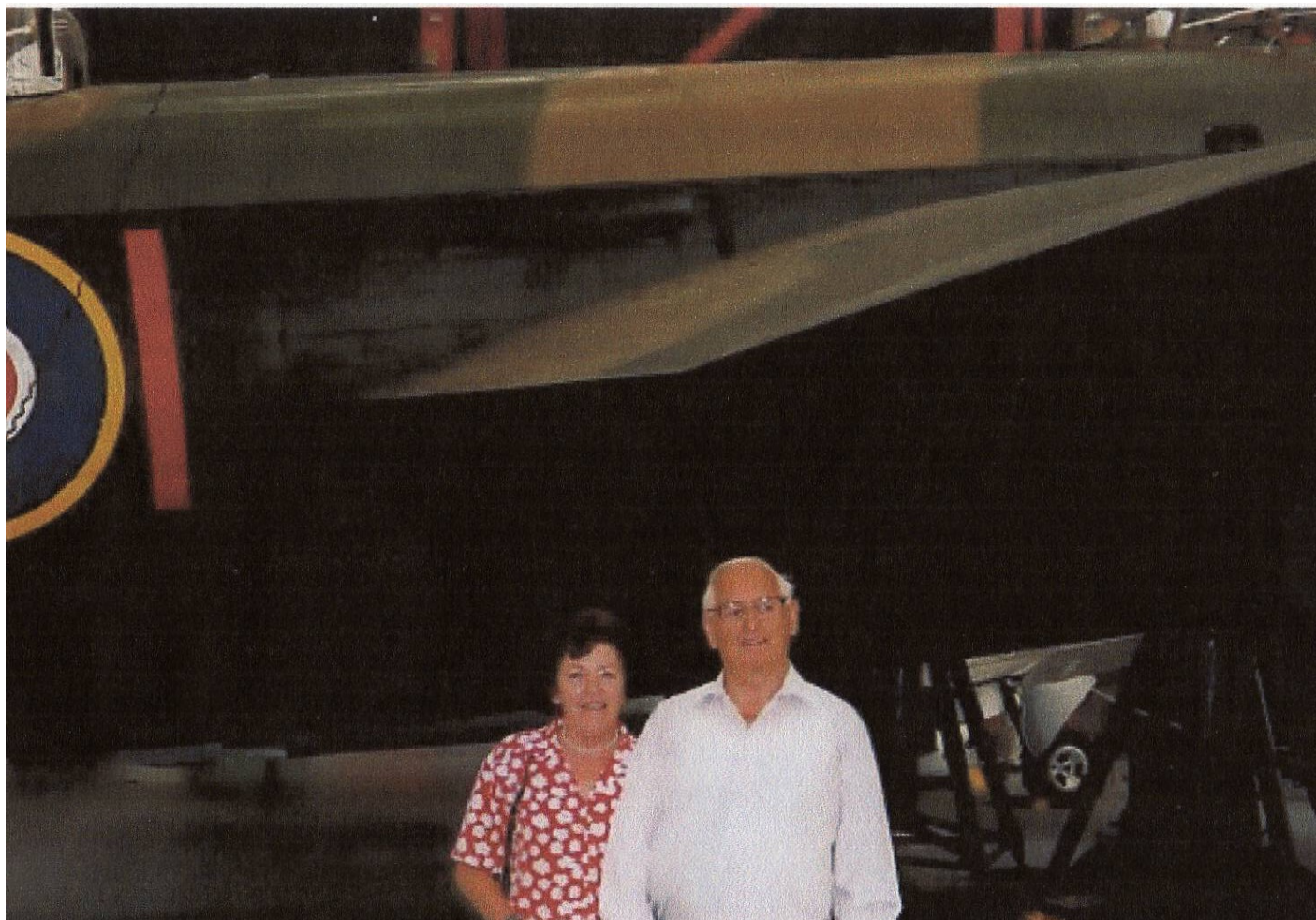
First UK Hydrogen bomb detonated over Malden Island on 15th May 1957



San Francisco July 1957 en route back to UK.
L to R: Unknown; Jnr Tech Leo Long ; SAC Les Gosling; SAC
Bob Newman; SAC Keith Ellis; Jnr Tech Frank Gooding.



Sqn Ldr D A Hammatt AFC DFM (today)
(Courtesy of John Clubb)



Flt Lt Peter Langdon DFM RAF with Mrs Langdon.
(Courtesy of John Clubb)

Another Excerpt from Don Crossley's **"How I Remember It"**

Flying at last.

On that morning at 0830 hrs. four of us were ready and waiting outside the hangar. We had seen and heard them taking off and landing but only from a distance. Here was one of these machines prepared and waiting just to further our training. The aircraft was a twin-engine biplane produced in the 1930's as a ten-seater civilian passenger plane. It was known as the Dragon Rapide, but the RAF designation was the Dominie, designed by De Havilland.

We were told to put on a parachute which looked like an old sleeveless anorak. It was heavy and fastened at the front. The chute itself (we were told) was folded across the back of the garment and would be released should we pull the handle which was at the front. On no account were we to touch this. It seems that the WAAF parachute packers took a dim view of having to repack them just because some idiot trainee had tried to carry it by its shiny handle. It's silly, but I couldn't take my eyes off the damn handle after such a stern warning!

Also, I thought, how do we know there is a chute inside it and not just some old army blanket padding it out? And the floor of the aircraft left me aghast. It looked to be only about half an inch thick. Surely there should be something more substantial between my feet and 5,000 feet of nothingness. I was not at all comfortable with that thought.

The first trip was arranged for air experience. We were to take turns at sitting at the radio and tune in to ground stations, transmitting and receiving messages as we had been taught. That was the straightforward plan - what had not been taken into account was the bucket.

The four of us scrambled aboard with the instructor and the pilot. I sat at the rear by a window and a fellow sufferer took a seat at the wireless, the first to have a stint at the set. Seat belts were fastened, flying helmets on and the engines were started. The Instructor was telling me something but I couldn't hear a word. Of course he was telling me to plug my helmet into the intercom. It didn't make a lot of difference as the microphone picked up the noise of the engine far better

than a voice.

I could hear someone talking, and I started to answer but the instructor was in conversation with the pilot and neither took kindly to my babbling over their conversation. So I was read the riot act even before we had started to taxi out. Which brings me back to the bucket. We were aware that airsickness sometimes occurs on the first trip - hence the bucket. I'd spotted it as soon as we boarded the plane. It was looking at me with a knowing smile on its face!

Suddenly we were moving; I looked at the instructor and said "I feel airsick!" "You can't be, we're still on the ground" he said "It's just psychological" "I feel sickological" I said but he took no notice and off we went.

I managed to keep it down for five minutes. I think what set me off was one of the others reaching for the bucket ahead of me. Not likely, matey! I had that bucket, and I wasn't going to surrender it! The rule was the guy who made the mess had to clear it up and, while I didn't mind slopping out a bucket, I drew the line at cleaning the floor of the plane! I compromised. Together we stuck our heads into the bucket for a vomiting duet. I can't remember whether or not I got on to the Marconi that day. I had somehow lost interest in the WAAF Wireless Operators on the ground.

My logbook shows that I was airborne on twenty one occasions during my stay at Yatesbury. The flying times vary between thirty five minutes and three hours five minutes. The number of times sick is not recorded. Having conquered the airsickness problem, I was now enjoying the time spent in the air. I was awarded my flying badge on 17th March 1944 along with my Sergeant's stripes.

More from Don next time.

The OG Philosopher Gives You a Choice

Some time ago, so the story goes, a man punished his 5 year-old daughter for wasting a roll of expensive gold wrapping paper. Money was tight, and he became even more upset when the child pasted the gold paper so as to decorate a box.

Nevertheless, the little girl bought the gift box to her father the next morning and said "this is for you, Daddy." Father was embarrassed by his earlier reaction, but his anger flared again when he found the box was empty. He spoke to her in a harsh manner "Don't you know, young lady, when you give someone a present there is supposed to be something in the package!" The little girl looked up at him with tears in her eyes and said "Oh Daddy, it's not empty, I blew kisses into it until it was full."

The father was crushed, fell on his knees, put his arms around his little girl and begged her to forgive him for his unnecessary anger. A short time later an accident took the life of the child and its told that the father kept that gold box by the bedside for all the years of his life and whenever he was discouraged or faced with difficult problems he would open the box and take an imaginary kiss and remember the love of the child who put it there.

In a very real sense, each of us as human beings have been given a golden box filled with unconditional love and kisses from our children, family and friends. There is no more precious possession anyone could hold.

Friends are like angels who lift us to our feet when our wings have trouble remembering how to fly. Think positive and act. Find something positive out of every negative which we don't always manage to do.

You can forget about this story, or you can pass it on

Continued from last time.... **Bob Hampson's story from** **"Half of my Service"**

We left Bob and Flt Lt Tillett hurtling towards the hangars.....

" I couldn't believe it, surely he'd throttle back? Almost at the edge of the tarmac the aircraft began to lift. The ground crew had scattered out of the way and we inched over the Torpedo Section roof at the rear of the two hangars. With inches to spare the aircraft cleared the three storied barrack block. I could see startled faces lining the veranda as they had rushed to see what the noise was about (how stupid can you get?)

Then Tillett turned to circle the drome to give me time to receive a 'W/ T Go' signal from base and as he did so he gave me a cocky wave and a dashing grin.....at least he thought it was a dashing grin but his face had turned a sickly green pea colour. I returned his grin with one of my own. It never occurred to me to wonder what colour my face was, and I never told him about his colour: thinking about it afterwards no doubt we were each other's mirror at the time.

We both realised that we had had a lucky escape from going out if not in a blaze of glory at least in a damn good blaze. The spectacular take-off was the talk of the town and incidentally the Bombing was not too bad either.

On 2nd June 1940, I flew to Ipoh. The day before I'd been playing golf. We had spent some time in the clubhouse. Taggesall took a swipe at his ball, missed it and caught me a nasty blow on the knee. We made our way to Sick Bay where a Corporal tutted and bathed the wound with a liberal dose of yellow fluid guaranteed to bring tears to the eyes, then he stitched and bandaged it, telling me to report back if I should feel any after effects.

I went off to Ipoh instead. When we eventually arrived back at Seletar, I was running a high fever. I was transferred to the Royal Victoria Hospital in Singapore and remembered no more. The next I recalled was a voice saying "Well chum, how are you feeling?" I later found out that a Chinese doctor had diagnosed a severe attack of Dengue Fever.

Another Blonde Joke

A plane was on its way to Houston, when a blonde travelling in Economy got up and moved into First Class. A Flight Attendant told the blonde that she had only paid for a seat in Economy and must move back.

The girl replied "I'm blonde, I'm beautiful, I'm going to Houston and I'm staying right here!" The Flight Attendant went into the cockpit to tell the pilots about this bimbo who wouldn't move back to her seat. "I'll see her" said the co-pilot, and asked the girl to return to her own seat. Again she replied "I'm blonde, I'm beautiful, I'm going to Houston and I'm staying right here!"

The co-pilot suggested to his colleague that they should have the police waiting upon landing at Houston to arrest this woman who would not listen to reason. "I'll handle this" said the pilot. "I'm married to a blonde - I speak blonde!!"

He went to the girl and whispered something in her ear. "Oh I'm sorry" said the girl and got up at once to return to her seat in Economy.

The Flight Attendant and the co-pilot were amazed and asked him what he had said to make her move without a fuss. "Simple" said the pilot "I told her that First Class wasn't going to Houston!"

New Members

Mr James Michie
PO Box 250 Springhill
Brisbane Queensland
Australia 4004

Mr Edward Gordon
27 Minster Road Ecclesfield
Sheffield Yorks S35 9X5
Tel: 01142 460149

Changes to telephone numbers

Mr A R Gaffney	01249 812606
Mr R S Hall	01522 800649
Mrs A Johnson	01472 200089
Mr D Alvarez	01923 404158

Changes of Address

Sqn Ldr L Park DFC RAF (Rtd)
27 Goomarl Street
Dudley Park
Mandurah 6210 Western Australia.

Adam Williams
Still at RAF Lossiemouth but now with XV(R) Squadron.

Mr L L Fletcher 23 Chelmsford House
Dunmow Essex CM6 1EZ
Tel: 01371 859148

Mr K L Johnson 43 Westgate Court
Caerleon Newport NP18 1NA
Tel: 01633 420409

Mr Tom Lee 22 Priory Court Ellison Grove off Archway Rd
Huyton Merseyside L36 9GE

More Amendments to the Membership List

Colin Bell lives in Yarburgh not 'Yarborough'
Henry Brown has a DFC
Brian Hulme e-mail : be411@tesco.net
Mrs K Reid Flat 10 Rathlin
S W Sumner lives in Kirkliston not 'Kirkstone'
Derrick Farmer e-mail: derrickfarmer1@aol.com

The Original Computer

Memory was something you lost with age.

An application was for employment.

A program was a TV show.

A cursor used profanities.

A keyboard was a piano.

A web was a spider's home.

A virus was the 'flu.

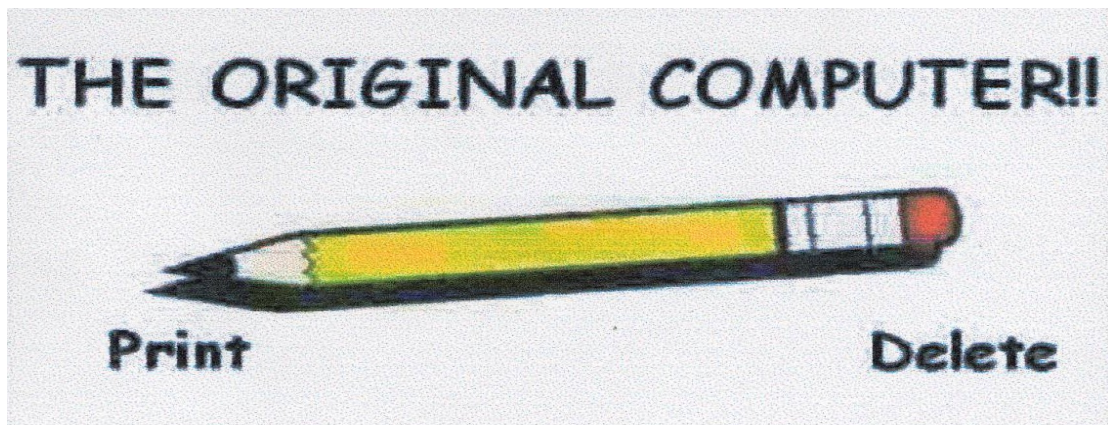
A CD was a bank account.

A hard drive was a long trip on the road.

A mouse pad was where a mouse lived.

And if you had a three inch floppy.....

.....you just hoped nobody ever found out!



What it means to be British

Being British is about driving in a German or French car to an Irish pub for a Belgian beer, then travelling home, grabbing an Indian curry or a Turkish kebab on the way, to sit on Swedish furniture and watch American shows on a Japanese television. And the most British thing of all? Suspicion of anything foreign!

Memorabilia etc.

Squadron ties - blue or maroon: £12 50 inc. p&p

Blazer badges (Specify King's or Queen's crown): £12.50 inc. p&p

"The Hornet's Nest" History of 100 Squadron: £12.00 inc. p&p

Supplement to Hornet's Nest: £4.50 inc. p&p

All the above are available from the Treasurer.

Cheques payable to 100 Squadron Association please.

Black baseball caps: £7.00 inc. p&p

From Flt Lt Adrian Lord

100 Squadron Leeming.

Cheques payable to 100 Squadron Aircrew Fund.

And finally, a message from Pip in Grashoek

Dear Hornet Readers,

When Arthur and Paddy White visited us they provided Grashoek with various goodies and photos. One item was a drawing of a plane's mascot, a rabbit named Skipper.

Wim van Ophoven who made the monument to the Lancaster sited in the woods in Grashoek has begun upon a project with the 'Bunny' as the starting point. He's been trying to find out about the name 'skipper' and is of the opinion that it was a title used for pilots during WW2 and has since fallen out of usage.

To ensure that he has the correct end of the stick, I am asking the help on his behalf to confirm or otherwise the title 'skipper'. I thought perhaps it may still be used in sporting circles: perhaps Ginger and his rugby pals can shed some light upon current usage?

Best wishes

Pip Dorssers Kay